



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

McGregor W. Scott
United States Attorney

1130 O Street, Room 3654
Fresno, California 93721

559/498-7272
Fax 559/498-7432

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Contact: David Gappa, 559-498-7272
Available at: www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home

**TWO MEN INDICTED IN SCHEME TO FILE FALSE
TAX RETURNS AND STEAL REFUND CHECKS**

FRESNO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in Fresno, California, returned an indictment against GILBERT TORRES, 62, of Selma, California, and ARMANDO GARZA, 65, of Orosi, California. The indictment alleges that the pair committed various offenses related to the filing of false tax returns, theft of refunds relating to those returns, and identity theft. TORRES is named in all forty counts, and GARZA is named in 13 counts.

According to the indictment, TORRES devised a scheme, from approximately April 2001 through August 2004, to file numerous false tax returns (Form 1040) using information relating to actual persons. The returns would contain false information about the alleged filer's residence, employment, and/or dependents. Most of the returns also contained forged signatures. The indictment alleges that the Internal Revenue Service issued checks ranging from \$229.00 to \$4811.00 based upon the information provided in the returns. Some of the refunds were issued as refund anticipation loans in the form of checks from various financial institutions while other checks were issued by the U.S. Treasury Department. TORRES and GARZA then devised a scheme to negotiate these checks without knowledge or permission from the people to whom the checks were issued. The total amount allegedly taken is approximately \$60,000.00

If convicted for the most serious offenses, TORRES and GARZA each face maximum possible prison sentences of 30 years, a \$1 million fine, five years of supervised release, and mandatory restitution to all victims.

The indictment is the result of an extensive investigation by Special Agent Brian Goold of the Treasury Department's Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) office in Sacramento and Special Agent Rob Holman of the U.S. Secret Service in Fresno. The police departments of Reedley, Selma, and Dinuba also assisted with the investigation. If anyone believes that they may have been victimized by the actions of TORRES or GARZA, and they have not already done so, they are encouraged to contact Special Agent Goold in Fresno at (559) 454-6405.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David L. Gappa.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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